

Seven Simple Tips for a Slimmer Thanksgiving

Eat, drink, be merry — and wear your skinny jeans to dinner

By Lauren Piro for Philadelphia Magazine

Thanksgiving without a feast would hardly be Thanksgiving at all, but you certainly won't be thankful for a new spare tire come January 1st. To avoid the potential pudge, follow these easy tricks from personal chef, caterer and registered dietician Katie Cavuto of Philly-based Healthy Bites. (And no, you don't need to nibble celery sticks all day, either.)

Start off smart.

Skipping breakfast may seem like a good way to save calories (and room) for a big ol' family-style meal, but that will just set you up for a binge-fest later. Tame your growling belly with a light, pre-turkey breakfast, like protein-packed egg whites or some fresh fruit.

Bite wisely.

“You eat your favorite foods because you like the way they taste,” says Cavuto. “Slow down and really appreciate each bite. The first bite tastes the same as the last, so have two instead of 10.”

Become friends with fractions.

Set aside half your plate for healthy vegetables (but not that creamy green-bean casserole, it's chock-full of fat and calories; try roasted asparagus or brussels sprouts instead), a quarter for lean turkey, and a quarter for those high-fat indulgences. The fiber from the veggies will fill you up so you won't be yearning for more when platters make a second trip around the table.

Say buh-bye to bread.

Bread is around every single day of the year. Skip those empty cals and processed carbs and save room for the dishes you're really looking forward to.

Light is nice.

Aim for a three-and-a-half-ounce portion (about the size a deck of cards) of the big bird and save 70 calories and 9 grams of fat when you choose white meat over its dark, skin-on counterpart.

Be picky about pours.

Sugary beverages won't satisfy you like your favorite Thanksgiving foods, so skip the sodas and the mixed drinks and nurse a glass of red wine instead. Just be weary of fish-bowl-sized goblets and see a half-empty glass as full.

Be a little selfish.

Let your sis bring the pie and bring your favorite low-cal dish. “I always show up to holiday meals with a healthy item,” says Cavuto. “That way I know there is a dish I can indulge in a bit without sacrificing my health or my waistline!”